



Northern Ireland

Courts and
Tribunals Service

www.courtsni.gov.uk

Turning 18

How to have funds released from Court



An Agency within

DOJ

Department of
Justice

www.djni.gov.uk

serving the community through
the administration of justice

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This document will be made available in a wide range of alternative formats. Requests should be made to the communications group.

When a young person is awarded compensation, for example due to an accident or other injury, the money awarded is held by the court on their behalf until they legally become an adult at 18. The branch of the NI Courts and Tribunals Service that looks after that money is the Court Funds Office (CFO).

This booklet explains what the young person will need to do when they turn 18 so that CFO can ensure that they receive their money as quickly as possible.

A “Request for payment or transfer of funds form” will be sent by post, to the young person the day before their 18th birthday. This is to ensure that the form does not arrive before they turn 18. **For legal reasons they are not entitled to sign the form until they are 18 years old and legally an adult.** If the form has not arrived within a few days of the young person turning 18, please contact CFO.

A covering letter, a certificate of funds detailing the funds held in court on behalf of the young person, and guidance notes explaining how to complete the form should also be enclosed with this form. We have tried to make these as easy to understand as possible and we would urge the young person to read through all the documentation carefully before they complete the form.

Depending on how the funds are invested, the young person has a number of options that are shown on the form. They must indicate which option they wish to choose;

- If the fund is held as cash in a deposit account this sum will be paid out when properly completed forms are received by CFO.
- If the fund has been invested in government stocks or equities (as detailed on the certificate of funds), the young person may choose to sell the investments and receive the money from the proceeds of the sales.
- Alternatively, the young person may choose to transfer some or all of the government stocks or equities into their own name. Once transferred into their name we will send them the appropriate certificates as confirmation. They will then receive future dividend payments directly and can retain or sell the investments in the future as they wish.

Young persons turning 18 are encouraged to seek **independent financial advice** before deciding whether to sell or transfer government stocks and equities in their fund. Useful websites on where to obtain independent advice include, www.fsa.gov.uk www.unbiased.co.uk and www.aifa.net

Prices on the stock market continually change. They can go down as well as up and the value of the stock may differ between the date on the certificate of funds and the date that payment is made. A certificate of funds, showing how the funds are invested can be requested at any time by writing to CFO.

We need details of the young person's bank account so that we can transfer any money held electronically into their account. If the young person does not have a bank account they may wish to consider opening one now. Electronic money transfer is quicker, cheaper and reduces the risk of fraud.

The young person's bank can help them make sure that the correct details are provided; we need the **sort code** (this is a six digit number) and the **account number** (this is an 8 digit number). We would urge particular care when completing this section as most payments that are delayed are as a result of the wrong details being provided. For example, sometimes people give the cash card number or roll number instead of the account number. If that happens, the bank will reject the payment and we will have to contact the young person to get the correct details, which will delay the payment.

Once the form is completed, the 18 year old should sign and date it in the presence of a witness. The witness must hold one of the jobs from the following list, they cannot be retired or related to the young person. After watching the young person sign, the witness must also sign and date the completed form.

The people that we can accept as witnesses are those in one of the following jobs;

- Social workers
- Barristers/Solicitors
- Dentist
- Judge
- Medical doctors
- Justices of the Peace
- Qualified accountants
- Officers of the armed forces
- Teachers / Lecturers
- Probation Officers
- Police officers
- Prison Officers
- Elected Official (eg MP, MLA, Local Councillor)
- Bank manager (including assistant managers)

In order to ensure that we are making payment to the right person, **two forms of identification must also be provided**, Please be aware that any identification provided must be original. If you are unsure come to our office in Belfast and we will inspect the documents in your presence, make a copy and give them back to you. Alternatively, you should speak to the Post Office about the types of delivery service they offer. Unfortunately we cannot take responsibility for items lost in the post.

One form of identification MUST be an original birth certificate. The second form of identification must be one of the following;

- Current student card
- Valid driving licence
- Electoral ID card
- Medical card
- Current passport
- Government issued ID card

If there is a problem with finding an original birth certificate or other identification, please refer to the “Other useful contact details” in this leaflet. We have included contact details of organisations what will help you to get replacements for the originals.

If the young person has changed their name since the date of the award, by virtue of adoption, marriage or deed poll, evidence of the change will also need to be enclosed with the completed form, before the funds can be paid out.

The young person should return the completed form with the proper identifications to CFO either by post to the address below, or by calling at our public counter. The public counter is open as follows:

Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm

The office is closed for public holidays.

If all the information is correct, payment should be made within 10 working days.

If the young person is not capable of managing their own funds on reaching 18, by way of mental incapacity, the Office of Care and Protection may administer their funds on their behalf. They can be contacted on 028 9072 4732 or 028 9072 4733, and will be able to explain how to make an application to the court.

We hope that this booklet is useful in helping speed up the payment process, but if you have any questions regarding this, or any other aspect of our service, please do not hesitate to contact us at the CFO. You can get more information about CFO by visiting our website at www.courtsni.gov.uk . Click on Services then Court Funds Office

For further information on the Courts Funds Office, please contact

Customer Services Team
Court Funds Office
Laganside House
23-27 Oxford Street
Belfast
BT1 3LA

Telephone: 028 9072 8900 or 028 9072 8894

Fax: 028 9072 8866

E-mail: courtfundsoffice@courtsni.gov.uk

Website: www.courtsni.gov.uk

Other useful contact details:

Birth and Adoption Certificates

The General Register Office
Oxford House,
49 – 55 Chichester Street,
Belfast
BT1 4HL

Telephone: 02890 252000
Website: www.groni.gov.uk

Passport

The Identity and Passport Office
Law Society House
90-106 Victoria Street,
Belfast BT1 3GN

Telephone: 0300 222 0000
Website: www.ips.gov.uk

Medical card

Northern Ireland Health and Social Services
Central Services Agency
2 Franklin Street
Belfast BT2 8DQ

Telephone: 028 9032 4431
Website: www.centralservicesagency.n-i.nhs.uk

Driving Licence

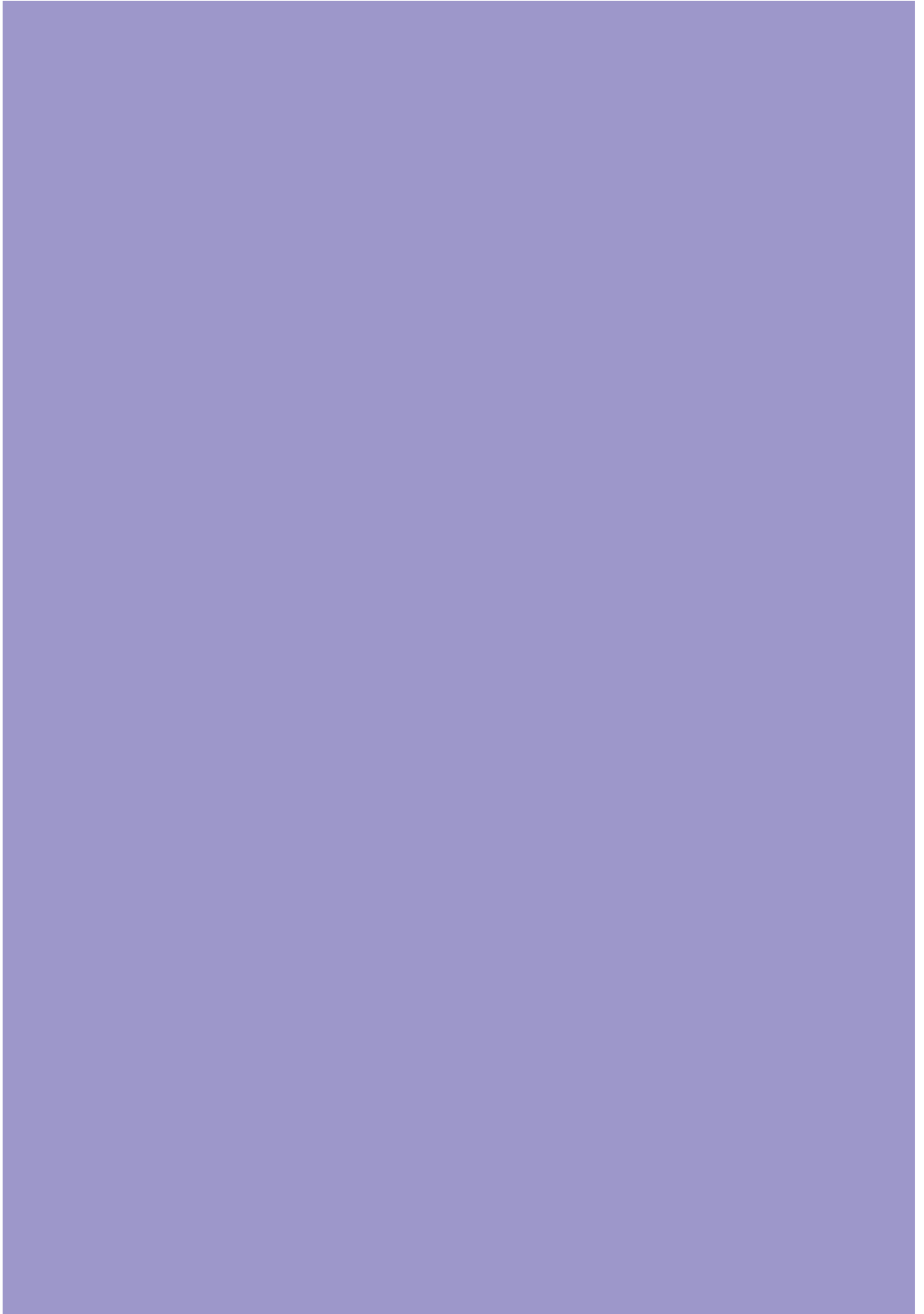
Driver Licencing Division
DVLNI
County hall,
Castlerock Road,
Coleraine BT51 3TB

Telephone: 0845 402 4000
Website: www.dvlni.gov.uk

Electoral ID Card

Electoral Office Headquarters
St Anne's House,
15 Church Street,
Belfast BT1 1ER

Telephone: 0800 432 0712
Website: www.eoni.org.uk



If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received, ask a member of staff for a copy of our 'Making a Complaint' leaflet. Alternatively contact communications group or visit our website at www.courtsni.gov.uk.

Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service
Communications Group
Laganside House
23-27 Oxford Street
Belfast BT1 3LA

Phone: 028 9032 8594

Fax: 028 9072 8942

Textphone: 028 9041 2920

Email: communicationsgroup@courtsni.gov.uk

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